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But really such comparison is but the merest play of Chinese puzzles and has not the value of the tactics of a game of backgammon.

Let us hope for many such books. Hero-worship is a very good thing, but hero-worship is not everything. Is it perhaps the greatest thing of all to speak for one's time—to be enough ahead of it to lead men where they falter or are afraid, not to be so far from it that they cannot hear one sound or other appeal? We despise Erasmus because, while he knew so much, he did so little. We are grateful to Luther because he did so much when he knew so little.

“Who dares think one thing and another tell  
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.”

Channing is one of those people who dare say what they think. He, like other people, gives clothes to the skeleton, giving weapons to the soldiers.

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#### THE PRESENT STATUS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

MORE than two years have passed since Professor G. A. Smith in his volume of Yale Lectures declared the war between criticism and the traditional views of Scripture ended and the fixing of the indemnity as the only thing left. Which side was to prescribe and which was to pay “the indemnity” Professor Smith did not leave indefinite. Not long afterward, however, came another herald claiming to speak on the subject of this war, Dr. John Smith, of Edinburgh, claiming that the contest was far from over, and that when it is ended, not the traditional side, but the critical, would be the one to pay the indemnity. Whether one or the other of the Drs. Smith be right in his declarations, there is a great host of Christian students and thinkers who are interested in the contest. And they cannot believe with the enthusiastic professor that the only thing left is the fixing of the indemnity, although they are not, on the other hand, as confident as Dr. John Smith is that the critical movement is on the verge of a collapse. They are interested in the answer to two questions: first, What is the present state of opinion among critics? and second, If criticism should be vindicated and the verdict become absolutely unanimous in its favor, what would ensue to the faith of the Christian? Would he be called upon to give up his Bible? And on the principle that “the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants,” would he give up his religion? Or, is there a *modus vivendi* between faith in the inspiration and authority of

Scripture and an absolutely untrammelled criticism leading into any historical conclusions that might appear logical and legitimate? The first of these questions is a question of fact, and Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter undertakes to answer it in a series of eight lectures.<sup>1</sup> The second is a hypothetical question to the average Christian thinker; but Professor McFadyen answers it from the point of view of one who has ceased to look at it as a possibility in the future, has confronted it and grappled with it with a vigorous hand.<sup>2</sup>

But, though differing in their specific aims, these two works naturally overlap at many points. Professor Carpenter could not have accomplished his expository and historical task without pointing out at various and frequent intervals the bearings of nineteenth-century criticism on the faith of the church. In addition to these hints interspersed through the first seven lectures, the author devotes the whole of his eighth lecture to the subject of the Bible and the church. On the other hand, Professor McFadyen could not have fulfilled his mission as a harmonist of Old Testament criticism and the Christian church without weaving into his work a large amount of history and exposition of the critical methods and results. It will scarcely be necessary to add more than one word further on the difference of the breadth of the field of these two works. Whereas Professor Carpenter surveys the whole history of biblical criticism, Professor McFadyen limits himself to the Old Testament altogether. As the principles involved, however, are the same in both the Testaments, and as no result reached in the Old Testament can long remain without its counterpart in the New, this difference is secondary and may be left out of the account in speaking at least of the harmony of criticism and faith.

The expository part of these works we shall not undertake to report in full. It will be sufficient to say that they agree in taking the current theory of the development of the Old Testament associated with the names of Graf, Wellhausen, and Kuenen as established beyond question.<sup>3</sup> Are they correct in this assumption? If by "establish" be meant that this theory is accepted by an overwhelming majority

<sup>1</sup> *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century*. Eight Lectures. By J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903. xvi+512 pages.

<sup>2</sup> *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*. By JOHN EDGAR MCFADYEN, M.A. (Glas.), B.A. (Oxon.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903. xxii+376 pages.

<sup>3</sup> Professor McFadyen gives a brief but wonderfully full statement of the theory in an appendix, pp. 365 ff.

(amounting to a practical unanimity) of the scholars and teachers who claim the field as their specialty, our answer must be in the affirmative. As the editor of the *Sunday School Times* points out:<sup>4</sup>

The fact now exists, to the shame of conservative biblical scholars—namely, that they are placing before the public no great works which at all compare in elaborateness and painstaking with those issued by their opponents. If it be said that this unanimity of scholars is no guarantee of the theory in question, no sane man ought to question the statement. The world has been unanimous in the acceptance of error too often in the past to make the mere unanimous acceptance of any theory a guarantee of its truth. Nevertheless, the practical unanimity of scholars on this subject is bound to give the theory the value of a working hypothesis, and the question must be inevitably asked: "Will it work?" and, "How will it work?" If it be said that the unanimity referred to is reached, not by the independent examination of the data by each man separately, but on the authority of a few "experts," and that thus it becomes a "new tradition" as against the old tradition, the answer is that there is a vital difference between the two traditions. Whereas the origin of one is lost in gray antiquity, the other has been formed within view of a watchful and keenly interested world. It is the difference between a reasoned tradition and an unreasoned one; and the intelligent student will know how to choose, if all that is to be said against any theory is that it is a "new tradition."

The net result, therefore, of a searching examination into the status of Old Testament criticism in the opening years of the twentieth century is the revelation of the strength of the Kuenen-Wellhausen theory. Conservative Christians who have been filled with alarm as they have viewed the steady and rapid progress of the critical views within the last quarter of a century, have been comforted from time to time with the cry: "A reaction is about to set in." Unfortunately, in every case the hopes raised by this cry have been doomed to disappointment. The leaders from whom great things were expected toward initiating a reactionary movement, not excepting Professors Sayce and Hommel—to say nothing of the ridiculous fiasco of Professor Margoliouth's *Lines of Defense of Biblical Revelation*—have proved broken reeds for the conservative to lean upon.

We are far from saying that the current theory is unalterably fixed. Too many changes have taken place within few years, since the second quarter of the nineteenth century, to make such a statement a safe one.

<sup>4</sup>January 31, 1903.

What the two works before us indicate is rather the necessity of inquiring whether, in case the Wellhausen hypothesis is found to have a century or longer before it, the faith of Christians would be damaged or materially affected. The question is a double one. It resolves itself first into the query, Does criticism prove fatal to Christian faith? and secondly, If not, in what respects does it lead to modifications of the faith?

The first of these questions is answered by both Professor Carpenter and Professor McFadyen with a decisive negative. Says Professor Carpenter:

The true value of the Bible has been enhanced [by criticism]. We have ceased to ask of it what it cannot give us; we cherish all the more what it can. . . . We cannot imagine either our history or our religion without the Bible. (Pp. 453, 454.)

In other words, we are and must remain believers in the religion of the Bible as we find it by historical study. Professor McFadyen is more explicit and emphatic. Criticism and faith are compatible because they coexist in the persons of the devout evangelical and aggressively evangelistic critics of the type of Professor George Adam Smith. It was useless for Lardner to attempt to prove that no steamboat could cross the Atlantic Ocean when the treatise containing his attempted proof was brought across the Atlantic by a steamboat. In the face of testimonies which he can cite from such men as Professor George Adam Smith, Dr. Batten, Professors Karl Budde, Kautzsch, Meinhold, and Loisy, he will not believe that criticism even tends toward cooling missionary zeal (p. 120). Some losses in spiritual power and insight he recognizes, but these are temporary and transitional. They are counterbalanced by larger gains of a permanent character:

The historical method eliminates the possibility of arbitrary, or at least unreasonable, interpretation. . . . It has rescued for us not a few books of the Bible. . . . It has given very great impetus to the study of the Bible. Never has so much strenuous and enthusiastic study been devoted to it before. . . . It presents us with a reasonable, probable, and even thrilling view of the development of Israel's history and religion. . . . It has relieved the double strain of moral and intellectual difficulty. . . . [Under its rule] the discrepancies, etc., which have perplexed many and given occasion to the adversary to blasphemy, may be turned to real apologetic account. . . . Many an extravagance in belief and conduct would never have been heard of had the Bible been interpreted by the historical method. . . . Finally it furnishes the simplest and strongest defense against the attacks of scepticism. (Pp. 122-31.)

It is not certain that Professor McFadyen can persuade every one of his readers that the positions above cited are well taken. But the fact that he takes them, and that he is ready to spend his most earnest effort and his most facile pen in the defense of them, is significant. Nor is he alone on his platform. Professor Gunkel is quite as ready to testify to the reinforcement of his faith by the historical criticism. Accepting the early accounts of Genesis as mythical or legendary, he nevertheless believes in their inspiration. He compares these accounts with their Babylonian parallels and exclaims in enthusiastic strains:

How immeasurably superior is the Hebrew story to the Babylonian! Shall we not then be glad that we have found in this Babylonian parallel a criterion to estimate the height of Israel's thought concerning God, which is powerful enough thus to purify and transform what is strangest and most repulsive.<sup>5</sup>

To the layman, even though he may not follow these men in the adoption of the new views, such testimonies cannot help bringing reassurance. If the temptation come to him to say that the critic who will not give up his faith must hold that faith at the expense of logical consistency, he will resist that temptation with the deeper thought that the critic would be guilty of a more serious logical inconsistency if he were to deny either the reality of the facts which he has discovered as a historical student or give up the faith which his heart accepts on equally strong grounds.

But if faith is not destroyed and is even reinforced by criticism, is it unaffected? Here, too, our leaders agree in their answer. Faith is modified. But they differ by the diameter of the circle as to the extent and kind of the modification it undergoes. According to Professor Carpenter, the nineteenth century with its study of the Bible has left Christianity a non-miraculous religion. Professor Carpenter is a student of comparative religion. He finds nothing in Christianity which does not reappear in some form or other in heathen religions. Inspired Scriptures, miracles in connection with its founders or great men, the virgin-birth of its founder, doctrines of incarnation, and in fact all that impresses one as characteristic of the Christian faith is duplicated in the other great religions of the world. Christianity accordingly must take what Kuenen assigned to it—a place as “one of the great religions of the world neither more nor less.” Jesus Christ is a teacher, the greatest of all, but still nothing more than a teacher descended of purely human ancestry and occupying a place in history like all the other great men of history. The position rep-

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by MCFADYEN, pp. 297, 298.

resented by Dr. R. W. Dale, "that the idea of the living Christ is the life-blood of evangelical Christianity; that in all ages it has been the source of the church's energy and happiness," Professor Carpenter sets aside without unseemly polemical vehemence, but firmly and positively.

But Professor Carpenter does not claim these conclusions as the necessary and inevitable results of the critical movement. On the contrary, he concedes that others may deduce other conclusions from the same data:

Different investigators will naturally attach different values to the same evidence; different questions will be approached from varying points of view; not all students will have the same preconceptions respecting the significance of the letter of Scripture, the value of tradition, or the function of the church. (P. 452).

The facts with which criticism has to deal are so many and diverse that men of different temperament and education will necessarily generalize differing theories from them.

We may go one step farther and assert that the conclusions of Professor Carpenter will never and can never be accepted as the legitimate results of criticism, because the spiritual nature of man will assert its rights. If criticism and the spiritual nature be pitted against each other, as they seem to be in Professor Carpenter's system, we do not hesitate to say that the spiritual nature will prove victorious. We do not say that its victory will result in its own pure and permanent life. Facts cannot be ignored and never will be. The true scientific scholar will respect facts and begin with them in the construction of his religious system. But facts apart from their meaning are dead and useless. And in the reading of facts faith will claim its prerogative of seeing their spiritual side. Professor Carpenter, and those whose conception of religion is his, will deny the reality of what the spiritual sense reports that it sees in the facts. But those who claim the spiritual sense will in their turn refuse to have their vision limited only to those aspects of fact which Professor Carpenter sees. The gulf at this point seems to us impassable. Voltaire could not see the beauties of Shakespeare. But the admirers of Shakespeare have not accepted Voltaire as their true interpreter of the poet.

Criticism, then, as such is not responsible for Professor Carpenter's views. This conclusion is fully corroborated as we turn to Professor McFadyen's estimate of the results of criticism in the realm of faith. First of all we are assured by this exponent of the critical views that

inspiration—the inspiration of the Bible—constituting it a unique and authoritative rule of faith and life, not only remains, but is even supported and strengthened by the new views:

Inspiration may be difficult to define, but the fact is impossible to ignore, whether we regard the express testimony of the prophets that they received their words from God, or the indirect testimony of the earlier part of Scripture to the presence of a spirit which effectually differentiates Hebrew literature from others to which it is akin (p. 302).

Predictive prophecy likewise remains, and the supernatural element conceived of as the power underlying the whole movement of thought in Israel. If we bear in mind the fact that Professor McFadyen's specific design did not involve the discussion of the supernatural from the point of view of the New Testament, we shall realize all the more thoroughly the significance of his claim that criticism leaves the supernatural in Christianity unaffected (chap. ix). Finally, the supremacy of Christ and his final and unimpeachable authority in the spiritual sphere are vigorously maintained by Professor McFadyen, and that not merely as things untouched by Old Testament criticism, but as set in a clearer light and given greater practical efficiency.

Perhaps the most useful chapter of Professor McFadyen's enticing, we might almost say brilliant, volume is that entitled "A Great Gulf Fixed?" It is needless to say that the question is asked with reference to the views respectively known as the traditional and critical. Recognizing the irreconcilable differences of these views on matters of a literary and historical nature, are these differences such that the adherents of the two standpoints cannot join hands together in the religious and spiritual sphere? The author answers with an emphatic negative. Does he support his answer adequately? In our judgment he does. The points of agreement between believers in the supernatural origin, unique character, and redemptive power of the gospel in the critical camp and the traditional decidedly overbalance and put out of sight the points of difference between them. The former are essential and vital; the latter are formal and outward. Professor McFadyen has not only made this clear, but has helped to bridge over the chasm, so far as there was one; and for this service he deserves the cordial recognition and sincere thanks of the scholars both of the traditional and the critical types, so far as they love the Word of God and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ.

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